DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 216 236 CE 032 716

AUTHOR	Gutterman, June K.; Todd, Julie
TITLE	Project INTERACT: An Interagency Linkage System between Education and Rehabilitation.
INSTITUTION	Central Ohio Special Education Regional Resource Center, Columbus. Ohio Resource Center for Low Incidence and Severely Handicapped.
SPONS AGENCY	Franklin County Board of Education, Columbus, Ohio.; Ohio State Dept. of Education, Columbus.; Ohio State Rehabilitation Services Commission, Columbus.
PUB DATE	28 Sep 81
NOTE	13p.; For related documents see CE 032 717-719. Project INTERACT was funded from September 29, 1980 through September 28, 1981.
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Agency Cooperation; Coordination; *Education; Educational Cooperation; Education Work Relationship; Prevocational Education; Program Development; *Referral; School Districts; Secondary Education; *Severe Disabilities; Vocational Education; *Vocational Rehabilitation
IDENTIFIERS	*Linkage; Ohio (Franklin County); *Project Interact

ABSTRACT

Project INTERACT was designed to develop a local model linkage system, an interagency effort between the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), Division of Special Education (DSE) to improve the joint delivery of services to severely handicapped students. It was also intended to design and/or modify student prevocational curricula/materials to prepare the severely handicapped to function in the adult world of work. Steps followed to design/implement the referral-based local level linkage system included establishing goal statement; identifying primary agencies and their mandate, purpose, and intent; identifying objectives; selecting committee participants; holding meetings; and followup. The model linkage committee addressed interagency communication, need to identify a continuum of services, and need for model referral procedures. The system was implemented in Franklin County, Ohio, by providing a specialized inservice for staff of involved agencies. To execute the programmatic linkage between education and rehabilitation, the project developed a functionally based educational level system that included a program development and evaluation process, functionally based educational level sequence, and documentation format. (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED216236

PROJECT INTERACT

An Interagency Linkage System Between Education and Rehabilitation

June K. Gutterman, Consultant
Identification and Program Development
Central Ohio Special Education Regional Resource Center
470 Glenmont Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43214
614/262-4545

Julie Todd, Coordinator
Ohio Resource Center for Low Incidence & Severely Handicapped
470 Glenmont Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43214
614/262-6131

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

June K. Gutterman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CG032716

The term severely handicapped is often used to describe a group of individuals who display a broad range of disabling conditions and exhibit a wide variety functional characteristics. For the purpose of this article the term includes those individuals with one or more of the following: visual handicap; hearing handicap; multihandicaps, orthopedic handicap; severe behavior handicap; and/or moderately, severe or profound retardation. Functionally, persons with severe handicaps are those who exhibit severe communicative, behavioral, developmental, educational, and/or vocational problems. These problems are generally multiple in nature, are likely to continue indefinitely, and may require the services of more than one agency/system. The severely handicapped population, therefore, is such a heterogeneous grouping that no single system possesses the total resources (personnel, expertise, and/or finances) to meet their divergent and complex needs (Rubin and Roessler, 1978, Elder and Magrab, 1980).

In Ohio, a task force of consumers and professionals raised a variety of concerns with regard to the need for improved and expanded education and rehabilitation programs which resulted in a timely and appropriate transition from Education to Rehabilitation (Madden, et al, 1980). Specifically, the following needs were identified: 1) coordinated/cooperative planning to avoid service discontinuity as students move from the Education system into the Rehabilitation system; 2) development of interdepartmental mechanisms and services to refine and implement the Ohio Joint Memorandum of Collaboration between the Education and Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies; 3) development of a central base of information and an interdepartmental liaison system through which program refinement could be

carried out; and 4) pre-vocational programs which equip the student with the prerequisite skills needed to function within the adult world of work.

In response to these concerns, Project INTERACT, an interagency effort, was designed to address the issue of timely and appropriate referrals of Ohio's severely handicapped students from Education to Rehabilitation by strengthening and facilitating programmatic cooperation between the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), Division of Special Education (DSE). It was felt that this could be accomplished through a linkage system which provided mechanisms that resulted in the integration and utilization of resources available through Education (special, regular, or vocational) and Rehabilitation (the state rehabilitation agency or community-based facilities).

Specifically, the project was to: demonstrate, through the development of a local model linkage system, an interagency effort between RSC and ODE to improve the joint delivery of services to severely handicapped students; and design and/or modify student pre-vocational curricula/materials in order to prepare them to function in the adult world of work.

Project INTERACT was funded by the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission from September 29, 1980 through September 28, 1981. The site for development and implementation of the project was the Franklin County/ Columbus, Ohio area.

Referral-Based Local Linkage System

The model referral-based local level linkage system was devised in order to address the timeliness and appropriateness of referrals of severely handicapped students from Education to Rehabilitation. The system was developed by a committee of representatives from the primary agencies involved in the referral process and the project staff. The following steps (procedures) were followed by the project

staff in designing/implementing the model system:

1. Goal Statement: A statement was established which clearly and directly articulated the specific purpose and intent of the linkage system.

2. Primary Agencies: Primary agencies were identified which represented only those agencies directly and actively involved in the implementation of the goal. For the purpose of a referral-based linkage system, the primary agencies filled the basic operational roles within the referral process: source (the component in which the referral originated - Education), agent (the component which acted as the referral conduit or broker - Rehabilitation), provider (the component which actually provided the service needed - community based facility).

3. Mandate, Purpose and Intent of Agencies: Federal and state laws were identified which govern the individual agencies involved in the system.

4. Local Operating Procedures: Local operating policies and procedures were identified that existed within the linkage area. This was accomplished by meeting with representatives from each agency individually.

5. Objectives of Linkage System: Specific statements were identified which reflected the objectives needed in order to achieve the goal of the linkage system (i.e., referral procedures, eligibility, etc.).

6. Selection of Linkage Committee Participants. A Linkage Committee participant was selected from each of the primary agencies; selection was based on the information gained through steps one to five above. In addition, consideration was given to the individual's commitment, time availability, authority within their system, and knowledge of their system, its operating procedures and the needs of

the population served.

7. Committee Meetings: Three committee meetings were held, one meeting every three weeks. Participants were provided a synopsis of each meeting and were contacted by telephone one week after each meeting in order to elicit their feedback. In order to provide structure for the meetings, the facilitator employed the following techniques: a) a realistic agenda was established; b) the content of each meeting was recorded; c) terms used by the different agencies were clarified or redefined generically and; d) information was charted on the chalkboard in order to assist in the clarification and conceptualization of the interface of the systems involved.

8. Follow-up: Follow-up was generated by the group. The facilitator was responsible for insuring that it occured.

It should be noted that within the context of this model that the facilitator functioned as the prime organizer of the linkage system and was responsible for the majority of the background development work. This function was important in establishing the initial direction of the system and in doing so in a time efficient manner. However, once the group was selected and the first meeting arranged, the group became the primary force in the development of the system. The facilitator became the clarifier, perception checker, mediator, and goal tender within the group. The facilitator struck a balance in the group between discussion and decision, thereby creating an atmosphere which allowed the group to reach consensus. The group's extensive involvement in the design of the linkage system resulted in expediting the task of system implementation.

The model linkage committee addressed the following: Inter-agency communication, the need to identify a continuum of services and the need for model referral procedures.

1) Interagency Communication: The degree to which an interagency linkage system is effective was thought to be dependent upon the communication that exists between agencies. The committee, therefore, sought to identify the primary agencies which need to engage in interagency communication, the levels at which communication should occur, and the frequency and the purpose of that communication in order to effectively and efficiently coordinate services to this population.

2) Continuum of Services: The committee attempted to chart the movement of a severely disabled student through an educational continuum and into and through the adult vocational continuum that exists in Franklin County. They also identified and established points of contact which were needed in order to create a working linkage between the two continuums.

3) Model Referral Procedures: The committee developed model referral procedures that would expedite and facilitate referrals. They viewed the referral of students within the context of a process that actually begins with the formulation of a goal for referral in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and continues until a determination of either eligibility or ineligibility has been made. Specifically, the committee sought to explain RSC's eligibility requirements, determine the kind of information needed to insure appropriate program planning in both systems, clarify the responsibility of persons involved, and establish a timeline of events which should occur to achieve a smoother referral process.

Model Implementation

The model linkage system was implemented within a major metropolitan area (Franklin County, Ohio) by providing a specialized inservice for the staff of the agencies directly involved in the linkage system. Regional

meetings were also conducted throughout Ohio in order to disseminate Project INTERACT information and obtain statewide feedback.

Summary: Linkage System

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the linkage system and its materials has been the clarification of the issue of Right vs. Entitlement and its effect on how systems operate. Specifically, educators are beginning to understand that rehabiliation is not a rights program and that rehabiliation is restricted in its ability to provide services, the type of services it can provide, and to whom these services can be provided.

In terms of direct impact, the agencies involved in the model area are exchanging program information and staff expertise. The result has been increased communication and cooperation between agencies.

Thus far, the discussion has centered on the Project INTERACT's efforts in addressing the issue of timeliness and appropriateness in terms of the referral process and doing so within the context of an interagency linkage system. The remainder of this article will focus on the issue of appropriateness in relation to the preparation of severely handicapped students to meet the demands of the vocational options available to them in the adult world of work.

Programmatic Linkage Between Education and Rehabilitation

The creation of educational programs which interface with the components of the adult vocational continuum serves as the programmatic linkage between Education and Rehabiliation. As previously stated, severely handicapped students exhibit diverse levels of functional abilities and therefore the employment options available to them would cross the spectrum of the adult vocational continuum (i.e., adult activity center, work activity center, sheltered workshop, competive employment, and exceptional employment). The preparation

of severely handicapped students to function within the adult vocational continuum requires a carefully designed educational continuum which is made up of program elements that interface with the components of the adult continuum.

In order to execute this programmatic linkage, Project INTERACT developed a functionally-based educational level system which includes a:

1) program development and evaluation process

2) functionally-based educational level sequence

3) documentation format

Program Development/Program Evaluation: This is a structure to be used by an administrator/supervisor in designing a comprehensive program which meets the needs of individual severely handicapped students. Specifically, it includes:

1) a checklist and description of a program development and evaluation process (adapted from The Walker System in order to meet the needs of an educational program);

2) a description of the program based on stated program goals;

3) a structure for developing program and classroom goals and objectives which relate to those of the student; and

4) program policies and procedures.

Functionally-Based Educational Level Sequence: The functionally-based educational level sequence focuses on those prerequisite skills needed to function productively and independently in the adult social, vocational, domestic, and community environments (White, 1980). These prerequisite skills are part of the concept of a work personality. This concept encompasses the ability to understand the demands of the world of work and to function within that world in an appropriate manner (Brolin, 1976) and (Mosher, 1978). A work personality primarily

embodies four elements:

1) General Adaptive Behaviors: Psychosocial coping skills or behaviors;

2) Functional Skills: Self-care, daily living skills, recreation, mobility, and functional academics;

3) Work Behaviors: Application of general adaptive behaviors within the context of a work setting;

4) Work Skills: Specific skills needed to perform a task or job.

The functional sequence is designed so that a student acquires a work personality/prerequisite skills by progressing across levels of performance in the following content areas: language/communcation, self-care, mobility, social behavior, functional academics, activities of daily living, work skills, and physical development/leisure.

Entry/exit criteria have been developed for each of the content areas at each level of the continuum. The criteria can be used to determine where a student is currently functioning and what he/she needs in order to progress to the next level of performance.

The entry/exit criteria can be used in the formulation of instructional objectives which, in turn, become the basis for a functional educational curriculum. The criteria for each of the levels of the educational continuum should reflect the skills and behaviors needed to function within its companion component in the adult continuum.

A functionally-based educational level sequence allows for the following:

1) realistic planning and preparation of students based upon current and future students needs;

2) smoother transition from the educational continuum to the adult continuum as a result of appropriate planning and preparation

of students; and

3) development of education programs which can accomplish the above.

Documentation:

This format has been designed to assist in the daily implementation of the student's IEP and in the documentation of student/classroom/program performance. Specifically, it includes:

1) a Program Implementation Plan which provides structure for daily implementation of the IEP; and

2) a data collection format which provides structure for documentation of actual student performance which in turn can be aggregated to document classroom and program performance.

Level System Implementation

This functionally-based educational level system is currently being implemented in two sites:

1) a major city school system's program for students with severe/multiple impairments (K through 12);

2) suburban school system's entire special education program (K through 12).

Summary: Functionally-Based Education Level System

The level system provides a structure for teachers and administrators to use in the development of educational programs for handicapped students which focus on the skills required to function within the adult world. Additionally, this system provides a programmatic linkage between Education and Rehabilitation by infusing the demands/options/needs of the adult vocational continuum into the educational continuum.

Conclusion:

The issue of timely and appropriate transition of severely handicapped students from Education to Rehabilitation was addressed

through the development of a linkage system and the design of a functionally-based educational level system. The combination of these two elements results not only in a smoother transition of students from one system to the other, but also in more appropriate preparation of severely handicapped to meet the demands of the adult world.

REFERENCES

Brolin, D. E. 1976. Vocational Preparation of Retarded Citizens. Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., Columbus.

Elder, J. O. and Magrab, P. R. 1980. Coordinating Services to Handicapped Children: A Handbook for Interagency Collaboration. Paul H. Brookes Publishers, Baltimore.

Madden, P., et al 1980. Report on Barriers to the Implementation of Public Law 94-142. State of Ohio Subcommittee on State-Wide Conference for the State Superintendents Advisory Council for Special Education.

Mosher, J. 1978. Employment and job placement. In: R. M. Goldenson, J. R. Dunham and C.S. Dunham (eds.). Disability and Rehabilitation Handbook. McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York.

Rubin, S. E. and Roessler, R. T. 1978. Foundations of the Vocational Rehabilitation Process. University Park Press, Baltimore.

White, O. R. 1980. Adaptive performance objectives: form versus function. In W. Sailor, B. Wilcox and J. Brown (eds.). Methods of Instruction for Severely Handicapped Students. Paul H. Brookes Publishers, Baltimore.